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The Indonesia Human Rights Campaign

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Honorary President:
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17 June 1990

Dr Mario Soares,
President of the Republic,
Prime Minister,
Palac Belem, Pr A Albuquerque
1300 Lisbon

Your Excellency,

As an organisation which has campaigned for years in support of East Timor's right to self-determination, we are gravely concerned to learn that the Australian Parliament has now ratified the Timor Gap Treaty. This means that Australia and Indonesia can start implementing the provisions of this unlawful Treaty.

We welcome the statement issued by your Government last December repudiating the agreement "as a clear and flagrant violation of international law" and re-affirming your Government's "determination to use all legitimate means within reach to safeguard the rights of the East Timorese people". As your Government rightly said at the time, "the Australian Government's attitude not only violates the rights of the people of East Timor to self-determination and to dispose of their own resources but also disrespects Portugal's legal status in this matter". It is a matter of regret for us that, as far as we know, your Government has not yet done anything to put these words into action.

Now that the Treaty has been ratified, we feel strongly that it is incumbent upon Portugal to proceed without delay and ask the International Court of Justice to deliver an opinion on the legality of the Treaty. It is the painful truth that there is no possibility at present for the people of East Timor to bring the matter before an international tribunal themselves as they lack legal standing to do so. Portugal is the only country in a position to act on behalf of the East Timorese. We feel that you should do so to preserve your own rights and fulfil your duties towards East Timor.

May we have your assurance that Portugal will now act, in order that this violation of international law does not go unchallenged? We have seen the opinions of several distinguished jurists and are convinced that the Court would issue an opinion condemning the Treaty as illegal.

We feel sure that there would be support for such a move in the European Community and in the international community as a whole, provided that your Government takes a firm stand and clarifies the grounds for its action. As a solidarity organisation, we would support such action in any way possible but we would feel bound to make our views known in the absence of action on your part.

Yours sincerely,

Carmel Budiardjo,

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CDPM,
We had to abandon
the joint letter - no response
except from Canada. Jan 11

with compliments

have received your Memo suggesting groups do their own thing.

Grubings

Carol